



## **Community partnership switchboard: Researching how and when to connect**

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**Conference track:** Community partnerships and outcomes

**Format:** Team inquiry presentation

### **Summary**

A requirement for successful institutionalization of civic engagement is a strong community partner program. Our presentation will describe data collection steps that link community need to institutional action by providing findings about obstacles and facilitators.

As a newly Carnegie classified Community Engaged institution, West Virginia University (WVU) and the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) are focused on providing support for all faculty, staff, and students who are expressing their civic responsibility. As with any relationship, each participant must be willing and able to meet the goals and visions of the other. In this session, we will present formulas, models, and examples of how and when to make connections.

The primary objectives of the presentation will be to:

- (1) Provide background information on the need for institutionalized civic engagement
- (2) Offer data about the WVU community partner program
- (3) Explore options in terms of centralized and decentralized partnerships

- (4) Discuss data collection processes that gather the most valuable data
- (5) Describe the experience from the perspective of the non-profit

The first step in our process allowed us to get some baseline data on the experience community agencies have with our students. After one year, researchers completed a follow-up survey to get more in depth feedback about the experiences and the benefit of the training students received from the CCE. We also gathered data from focus groups of community partners.

Based on our data, we will present obstacles and solutions that can make the process of partnership less cumbersome. Specifically, the data pinpoints areas of weakness and strength in communication, public relations, and fulfillment of our goals. Our aim is to share the findings of our data in order to assist in the development and growth of community partner programs as stewards of civic engagement and experts on making connections that work.

### **References**

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